

# **GUIDELINES for NEW RESIDENTS**

**How to obtain a Delaware Driver License**

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**How to Register Your Vehicle**

**State of Delaware  
Department of Transportation  
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
P.O. BOX 698  
Dover, Delaware 19903  
[www.dmv.de.gov](http://www.dmv.de.gov)**



## **HOW TO OBTAIN A DELAWARE DRIVER LICENSE**

### **IF YOU HOLD A VALID LICENSE FROM ANOTHER STATE:**

To continue to drive in Delaware you must apply for and receive a Delaware driver license within 60 days after becoming a Delaware resident.

Although most traffic laws in all states are somewhat uniform, there are some that may be unique to Delaware. Because of this, we suggest that you pick up a driver manual at one of our offices to acquaint yourself with Delaware's traffic laws. When you obtain your driver license you may also register to vote and/or become an organ donor through our offices.

You must apply in person at one of the offices of the Division of Motor Vehicles in Wilmington, New Castle, Dover, or Georgetown. Addresses of these offices are listed on the last page of this document.

You will be required to pass an eye test. The written test and the road test may be waived if you hold a valid driver license from another state. New residents should be prepared to show two proofs of Delaware residence (i.e. rent receipt or lease, and original electric, telephone or other utility bills, etc.) and proof of Social Security Number. Upon receiving a Delaware driver license you must give up all valid licenses from other states. If your out-of-state license has expired, you must present to the Division at time of application, a current driving record from your previous state of residence and be prepared for a written test. Unlicensed drivers must present a certified birth certificate to show their correct name and date of birth.

If you are under 18 years of age, you must have completed a course in driver education, which must be approved by the Delaware Dept. of Public Instruction. Also, one parent (with whom the child resides) is required to sign your application.

Beginning on July 1, 1999, those drivers under 18 years of age who transfer from another state will be issued a graduated driver license unless their out-of-state license was issued for over one year, and the driver has reached at least 17 years of age.

Members in the military service and their dependents are not required to acquire Delaware driver licenses and vehicle registrations until 60 days after separation from the service.

You must pay a fee of \$25.00. Your license will expire 5 years from your last birthday.

## **HOW TO TITLE/REGISTER YOUR VEHICLE**

**New residents must title/register their vehicles within 60 days after becoming a Delaware resident. State law requires changes of address to be reported to the Division of Motor Vehicles within 30 days.**

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE, FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PENALTY**

### **Step 1.**

The first step in obtaining a Delaware vehicle title/registration is to establish your (the owner(s)) financial responsibility. This is done by purchasing a liability insurance policy from a company licensed by the Insurance Commissioner to operate in Delaware. The minimum coverage is:

- \$15,000 for bodily injury or death of one person in any one accident.
- \$30,000 for bodily injury or death of two or more persons in any one accident.
- \$10,000 for injury to or destruction of property of others in any one accident.

The Division requires verification that the car to be registered is properly insured. One of the following documents is acceptable:

- Insurance Identification Card -- All insurance companies are required to issue such cards. The card must be carried in the vehicle at all times and include the period of coverage and the NAIC code.
- A valid insurance policy.
- A written binder within 30 days of issue from an insurance company or agent on the insurance company's letterhead.

The penalty for operating an uninsured vehicle is a fine not less than \$1,500 and/or 30 days in jail and suspension of driver's license for 6 months.

**THE INSURANCE ID CARD PRESENTED MUST BE VALID, OR IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE REQUIRED TO ISSUE A NEW ID CARD AT LEAST EVERY YEAR. OWNERS CANCELING INSURANCE FOR ANY REASON MUST SURRENDER THEIR VALID LICENSE PLATE TO THE DIVISION. FAILURE TO SURRENDER YOUR LICENSE PLATES PRIOR TO INSURANCE CANCELLATION WILL RESULT IN FINES.**

The Division of Motor Vehicles randomly audits for proof of insurance on active registrations. The penalty for being uninsured is \$100 for 1-30 days and an additional \$5 per day until insurance is obtained, tags are surrendered or the registration expires. In addition, suspensions are imposed on the registration and on the driver's license of all owners who fail to respond to the request.

## **VEHICLE INSPECTION**

### **Step 2.**

The second step in obtaining a Delaware vehicle title/registration is to have your motor vehicle inspected at one of the offices of the Division of Motor Vehicles.

A check of the following items is recommended before your vehicle is presented for inspection; it may save you a return trip for re-inspection:

Certificate of Title and proof of insurance must be presented.

- All lights must be clean, in working order, and properly aimed.  
This includes stop lights, turn signals, license plate light, parking lights, and head lights.
- Brakes must stop the vehicle within required distances.
- Glass in windows must have no holes, breaks, or cracks.
- Mirrors must be clean and unbroken.
- Windshield wipers must be fully operative (the rubber blades must be in good condition).

- Hood and trunk latches must hold hood and trunk fully closed.
- Tires must have no bulges, no fabric showing, no bald areas and no cuts. Tread depth must be at least 2/32 inch measured in two adjacent treads.
- Doorknobs or equivalent must be present and in working condition.
- There must be no damaged or dislocated parts projecting from the vehicle that could present a safety hazard.
- Horn must be in operating condition.
- Muffler must effectively reduce sound of engine exhaust. No leaks in exhaust system. Catalytic converter must be installed if originally equipped from manufacturer.
- There must be no gasoline leaks.
- Seat belts must be worn.
- Bumper height on passenger cars must not exceed 22 inches from the ground to the bottom of the bumper.
- No tinting or sun screening device can be applied to the front windshield or to the front side windows.
- No air scoops shall be mounted on a vehicle hood that exceed 3 inches in height.
- Motor vehicles will be tested for exhaust emissions and some vehicles are subject to fuel systems checks for leaks.
- Windshield must have no cracks which interfere with vision; any cracks over 5 inches on any window are mandatory failure items; minimum height of visibility in windshield is 10 inches.

**\*\*\*POOR CONDITION OF ANY OF THE FOREGOING ITEMS MAY BE CAUSE FOR REJECTION.\*\*\***

Vehicles in unsafe condition, lacking required equipment, or not in proper repair or adjustment will be rejected. The inspection technician will provide an inspection report showing the rejected items. These items must be corrected, and the vehicle reinspected and passed prior to the issuance of a title, registration card and license plate. Vehicle owners whose registration is about to expire may be eligible for a temporary tag if the failure item is not safety related.

**\*\*\*THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CUT OFF INSPECTION LANE LINES IF CUSTOMER WAITING TIMES EXCEED DIVISION OPERATING HOURS.\*\*\***

## **TITLE**

### **Step 3.**

The third step in obtaining a vehicle registration is to apply for a Delaware title and registration.

If the vehicle is coming from a state which issues certificates of title, a certificate of title must be surrendered to the Division of Motor Vehicles at the time the application is filed. If there is a lien or encumbrance against the vehicle, the Division will provide a form letter (MV-35) to send to the lienholder to obtain the certificate of title.

Applications (MV-212) for certificate of title and registration are issued by an inspection technician after your vehicle passes the emission test and safety inspection. The application must be signed by all owners of the vehicle, or by someone with power of attorney to sign for such owner(s), or by an officer of the company owning the vehicle. (Power of attorney must be notarized.) Whenever a motor vehicle is brought into Delaware from another state and a title and a registration is sought, the owner must pay a vehicle document fee of 2.75 percent (3.25

percent effective October 1, 2007, and 3.75 percent effective October 1, 2008) of the value of the vehicle but not less than \$8.00, unless the owner presents proof that he/she has paid to such other state, a sales tax, transfer tax or some similar levy on the purchase of the vehicle within ninety (90) days prior to registering in Delaware. The value of the vehicle shall be the current NADA Average Trade-in book value or purchase price, whichever is greater.

If there is a change of ownership at the time of application, a motor vehicle document fee amounting to 2.75 percent (3.25 effective October 1, 2007, and 3.75 percent effective October 1, 2008) of the purchase price or current NADA Average Trade-in book value, whichever is greater (but not less than \$8.00) must be paid. If the vehicle was purchased from a dealer, a dealer's invoice must be presented.

Proof of liability insurance must be submitted at the time of titling or registering a vehicle (see paragraph regarding liability insurance).

The title fee is \$15.00 if there is no lien or \$25.00 if there is a lien against the vehicle (\$25.00 if there is no lien and \$35.00 if there is a lien effective October 1, 2007.)

The registration fee is \$20.00 (\$40.00 effective 10/1/07,) for one year or \$40.00 (\$80.00 effective 10/1/07) for two years for all passenger cars and station wagons. New passenger vehicles being titled for the first time can be registered for five years at a cost of \$100.00 (\$200.00 effective 10/1/07.) You have the option to register for up to five years depending on the model year of the vehicle; however, the vehicle must be inspected prior to your registration expiration. The Division recommends that you renew your registration for the maximum years allowed.

Registration fee for six (6) months is \$11.00 (\$21.00 effective 10/1/07.) Registration fee for commercial vehicles is \$20.00 (\$40.00 effective 10/1/07) for first 5,000 lbs. with increments of \$16.80 (\$18.00 effective 10/1/07) per 1,000 lbs. above 5,000 lbs. Trailer fee is \$10.00 (\$15.00 effective 10/1/07) per year for 1,000 lbs., \$12.00 (\$20.00 effective 10/1/07) per year for 1,001 lbs. to 2,000 lbs., and \$20.00 (\$40.00 effective 10/1/07) per year for 2,001 lbs. to 5,000 lbs. with increment of \$16.80 (\$18.00 effective 10/1/07) per 1,000 lbs. above 5,000 lbs. Recreational Vehicle and Recreational Trailer fee is \$20.00 (\$40.00 effective 10/1/07) per year for first 5,000 lbs. with increments of \$5.20 (\$6.40 effective 10/1/07) per 1,000 lbs. above 5,000 lbs.

Upon submission of all necessary documents and their acceptance, and payment of the vehicle document fee, title fee and registration fee a certificate of title, registration card and license plate will be issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles. If there is a lien against the vehicle, the title is mailed to the lienholder.

### **REQUIREMENT FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE**

If you are less than 18 years of age, your application for a certificate of title must be signed by your father, mother or guardian granting consent to the application.

## RENEWING REGISTRATION

Prior to registration renewal you must present proof that the vehicle is covered by adequate liability insurance ( see paragraph regarding liability insurance) and passed the State's vehicle safety inspection and emission test. You may have your vehicle inspected **anytime 90 days prior to the expiration date** of the registration, e.g., if your registration expires on June 30th, you may have your vehicle inspected anytime after April 1st. **No time is lost by renewing early.** You may also renew your registration at that time or you may renew any time up to the expiration date. It is suggested that you avoid the waiting lines normally experienced on the last few days of each month by presenting your vehicle for inspection early in the month. **REGISTRATION RENEWAL NOTICES ARE MAILED FOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS THAT ARE DUE FOR RENEWAL. TAGS EXPIRE ON THE 15TH OR THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH AS INDICATED ON YOUR STICKER AND REGISTRATION CARD. A LATE FEE OF \$10.00 IS CHARGED FOR LATE RENEWALS.** Trailers weighing 4,000 pounds or less do not require re-inspection prior to renewal of the registration.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF OWNER

The registration certificate and proof of liability insurance must accompany the motor vehicle whenever it is operated. The registration plate (tag) must be affixed to the rear of the vehicle in the designated position and must bear the sticker showing year and month of expiration on the lower right corner of the plate. Your registration expires at midnight on the day of the month indicated on the sticker. There is no grace period.

## OFFICES AND STATIONS FOR VEHICLE INSPECTION, REGISTRATIONS, TITLES AND DRIVER LICENSES

### GREATER WILMINGTON

2230 Hessler Boulevard  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Telephone: (302) 434-3200

### NEW CASTLE

Airport Road and Churchman's Road  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Telephone: (302) 326-5000

### DOVER

Route 113 - 303 Transportation Circle  
P.O. Box 698  
Dover, DE 19903  
Telephone: (302) 744-2500

### GEORGETOWN

Route 113 - 23737 DuPont Boulevard  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
Telephone: (302) 853-1000

### \*\*\*OFFICE HOURS\*\*\*

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
12 noon to 8:00 p.m.

**\*\*\*FOR OBTAINING A DRIVER'S LICENSE, TITLE OR VEHICLE  
REGISTRATION WE SUGGEST THAT YOU APPEAR AT LEAST ONE-HALF HOUR  
BEFORE CLOSING TIME TO ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR PROCESSING\*\*\***